

Guiding questions for your group project

Keep these questions in mind as you design and carry out your research. The specific questions you examine in your research in the organization will of course be different. Some of you may want to focus more on institutional dimensions, others on political aspects, still others on individuals' life-stories. Those choices are up to you and depend on what you find most interesting and important. But overall I would like you as much as possible to try address the following in your presentations.

1. What kinds of problems is this organization trying to address, and how?
 - a. Each organization is trying to address numerous social problems. So please try to restrict your focus only to 1 or 2, so that it is manageable and you can examine it in some depth
 - b. Rely on your observations and fieldnotes to understand, describe, and analyze how the organization is addressing these problems
2. What do leaders/members of the organization think are the causes of these problems?
 - a. From your interviews and conversations with them, what evidence do they seem to rely on for thinking about causes of and solutions to these problems?
 - b. Why are these problems important to them?
 - c. Do you perceive differences between leaders and others (staff, clients, etc.)?
3. What obstacles do they face in addressing these problems?
 - a. What obstacles might be caused by external factors, and what obstacles might be a result of factors internal to the organization (perhaps something the leaders are not conscious of?)
4. What sociological perspectives on assumptions about/causes of/solutions to these problems are relevant to your study?
 - a. Do approaches in this organization resonate with any findings from or debates in sociological research?
 - b. Is there something from sociological research you have come across that people in this organization are not aware of and could benefit from?
 - c. Does their experience, or your experience in these organizations, have any insights/contributions/challenges to offer to the readings we have discussed in class?
5. What was the experience like for you, individually and as a group?
 - a. What was unexpected? What was confirmed or challenged in your thinking? What worked well? What would you do differently?